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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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10/576,283

12/11/2006

Birger J. Natvig

OPA 329

1861

23581 7590 08/18/2009

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EXAMINER

MAYO, TARA L

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

3671

MAIL DATE

DELIVERY MODE

08/18/2009

PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/576,283	Applicant(s) NATVIG, BIRGER J.	
	Examiner TARA MAYO-PINNOCK	Art Unit 3671	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 17 July 2009.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-10 and 12 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☒ Claim(s) 5-10 is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-4 and 12 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 17 April 2006 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☒ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114

1. A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on 17 July 2009 has been entered.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

2. The prior rejection of claim 4 under 35 USC §112, second paragraph has been overcome by the response filed 17 July 2009 wherein Applicant amended claim 4 to obviate a rejection for improper antecedent basis.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

3. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

4. Claims 5 through 8 and 10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Crout et al. (U.S. Patent No. 3,823,564 A).

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Crout et al. '564, as best seen in Figure 5, disclose a seagoing vessel (100) for removing and installing and transporting an offshore jacket structure (20), said vessel comprising:
with regard to claim 5,

a ballastable main buoyancy section (102,104,118,120,122, collectively) and two elongate auxiliary buoyancy sections (110,112) protruding in the same direction on either side of the main section, characterized in that the main buoyancy section is generally planar and has in plan view substantially the outline of an isosceles triangle with an extension at the apex, said extension forming the fore part of the vessel and the base of the triangle forming the aft part, the auxiliary sections being located at the ends of the base;

wherein the seagoing vessel is configured such that by appropriate ballasting the entire vessel can be rotated so that the main section assumes an approximately vertical condition and can then be secured to the jacket structure so that the auxiliary buoyancy sections are located on opposites sides of the jacket structure, and then deballasted to rotate the vessel back to a generally horizontal position; and
with regard to claim 6,

characterized in that a transverse buoyancy section (124, 126) bridges the gap between the auxiliary buoyancy sections, each auxiliary buoyancy section comprising a single column;
with regard to claim 7,

characterized in that at least the main section of the vessel is made from stiffened flat steel plates (per col. 13, line 31 through 37);
with regard to claim 8,

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characterized in that it semi-permanent ballast in the lower parts of the auxiliary buoyancy sections; and
with regard to claim 10,

characterized in that it has external rounded surfaces at the lower ends of the auxiliary buoyancy sections configured to permit the vessel, when in use, to pivot towards or away from said jacket structure while in contact with the seabed.

Allowable Subject Matter

5. Claims 1 through 4 and 12 are allowed.
6. As allowable subject matter has been indicated, applicant's reply must either comply with all formal requirements or specifically traverse each requirement not complied with. See 37 CFR 1.111(b) and MPEP § 707.07(a).

Response to Arguments

7. Applicant's arguments filed 17 July 2009 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

In response to Applicant's argument that Crout et al. '564 do not disclose a vessel for removing an offshore jacket structure, it has been held that a recitation with respect to the manner in which a claimed apparatus is intended to be employed does not differentiate the claimed apparatus from a prior art apparatus satisfying the claimed structural limitation. *Ex parte Masham*, 2 USPQ2d 1647 (1987).

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Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to TARA MAYO-PINNOCK whose telephone number is (571)272-6992. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Friday 8:30 AM to 5:00 PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Thomas B. Will can be reached on 571-272-6998. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/TARA MAYO-PINNOCK/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 3671

tmp
17 August 2009